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CLA Operations Center

Subject Middle East

Date

March 16, 1978

Analyst/SDO

Distribution

White House Spot Report

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			WON THE ENTH	JSIASTIC SUPPORT
OF THE ISI	A MOOD APPR		R FEVER HAD DE	VELOPED IN ISRAELD
PRIOR TO	THE OPERATION	AND HAS BE	EN FOLLOWED B	Y A CATHARTIC SENSE
OF RELIEF	AND PRIDE.	THE OPPOSIT	TION LABOR PAR	TY HAS RALLIED
FIRMLY BE	HIND THE GOVE	RNMENT. F	RMER FOREIGN	MINISTER ALLON A
PROMINENT	LABOR PARTY	LEADER , HAS	S ENDORSED THE	GOVERNMENT'S
INTENTION	TO KEEP FORCE	ES IN SOUTH	HERN LEBANON U	NTIL AN AGREEMENT
IS WORKED	OUT THAT BAR	S THE RETUI	RN OF THE PALE	STINIAN GUERRILLAS.
THE G	OVERNMENT STI	LL FACES		QUESTIONS
OVER THE	CIRCUMSTANCES	SURROUNDI	NG THE TERRORI	ST RAID. RUMORS
HAVE ALRE	ADY APPEARED	IN THE ISR	AELI PRESS SUG	GESTING THAT THERE
WAS A SEC	URITY LAPSE.			
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THE EVENTS OF THE PAST WEEK, HOWEVER, HAVE AT LEAST TEMPORARILY REVERSED THE EROSION IN PRIME MINISTER BEGIN'S POPULAR SUPPORT.

HE IS BEING CREDITED WITH TAKING STRONG, DECISIVE ACTION. Y

BEGIN IS ALMOST CERTAIN TO TRY TO TURN THIS TO HIS ADVANTAGE

DURING HIS TALKS NEXT WEEK IN WASHINGTON WITH SENIOR US OFFICIALS.

SECURE AT HOME AND BANKING ON AN UPSWELLING IN SYMPATHY FOR

ISRAEL IN THE US, BEGIN PROBABLY WILL TRY TO BUILD A STRONG PUBLIC

CASE ON SECURITY GROUNDS FOR HIS DIFFERENCES WITH THE US OVER THE

SETTLEMENTS, QUESTIONS AND UN RESOLUTION 242. Y

THE ISRAELI OCCUPATION OF A BUFFER ZONE IN SOUTH LEBANON

PLACES SYRIA PRESIDENT ASAD IN A SERIOUS PREDICAMENT. ASAD

HAS INVESTED MUCH OF HIS PRESTIGE IN RECENT YEARS IN PROJECTING

SYRIA AS THE PROTECTOR OF THE PALESTINIANS AS WELL AS THE

DEFENDER OF LEBANON. SYRIA'S FAILURE TO ACT AGAINST THE ISRAELI

SATTACK HAS CALLED INTO QUESTION BOTH CLAIMS. Y

THE IRAGI AND EGYPTIAN PRESS HAS ALREADY TAUNTED ASAD FOR

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	Y TO FEND OFF SUC	
ACCUSING EGYPT OF ACQUIESCING IN	ISRAEL'S OCCUPAT	ION OF SOUTH
LEBANON BUT THE PRESSURE WILL MO	OT OT AZAD TO DO	SOMETHING.
SYRIA'S PUBLIC PROMISE TO PROVIDE	E AIR COVER FOR L	EBANON REFLECTS
ASAD'S RECOGNITION OF THE NEED T		
ASAD WILL PROBABLY ENCOURAGE THE	PALESTINIANS, ES	PECIALLY SYRIAN
CONTROLLED SAIGA FORCES, TO HOLD	THEIR POSITIONS	BETWEEN THE
SYRIAN FORCES IN CENTRAL LEBANON	AND THE ISRAELIS	. Y
SO FAR	ZTNAW DAZA	TO AVOID A
DIRECT MILITARY CONFRONTATION WI	TH ISRAEL. SYRIA	AN FORCES IN
LEBANON HAVE BEEN ORDERED TO FIR		
SYRIAN AIRCRAFT HAVE AVOIDED ENT		
SYRIA'S DEMARCHE TO THE MEME		
REFLECTS ASAD'S DESIRE TO SOLID		
AN ISRAELI-OCCUPIED BUFFER ZONE	. THE SYRIANS ARE	
THE LEBANESE ARMY IS COMPLETELY		
ROLE IN THE SOUTH AND THAT THE	ISRAELIS WILL NOT	WITHDRAW UNLESS
THE PALESTINIANS ARE KEPT AWAY	FROM THE BORDER.	Ų
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IN THE PAST THE SYRIANS HAVE RESISTED EFFORTS TO ESTABLISH

A UN PEACEKEEPING FORCE IN SOUTH LEBANON. BELIEVING THAT THIS

WOULD INFRINGE ON THEIR PREEMINENT POSITION IN LEBANON. ENDORSING

SUCH A FORCE MIGHT ALSO HAVE PROMPTED CHARGES THAT SYRIA

ABANDONED THE PALESTINIANS' LAST "FRONT" AGAINST ISRAEL.

NONETHELESS ASAD WOULD PROBABLY NOW FIND A UN FORCE MORE

PALATABLE THAN A CONTINUED ISRAELI PRESENCE. WITHOUT PUBLICLY

ENDORSING SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT HE MAY TACITLY ENCOURAGE THE

LEBANESE TO PURSUE IT. Y

EGYPT PRESIDENT SADAT YESTERDAY JOINED OTHER ARAB LEADERS
IN CONDEMNING ISRAELI'S ATTACK INTO LEBANON. HE EMPHASIZED THAT
ISRAEL'S SECURITY GOALS CAN BE MET ONLY BY SOLVING THE PALESTINIAN
PROBLEM, NOT BY FORCE OF ARMS. SADAT VOWED TO CONTINUE HIS SEARCH
FOR PEACE. Y

OTHER EGYPTIAN OFFICIALS AND THE MEDIA YESTERDAY SHARPLY

CRITICIZED "SRAEL"S "GENOCIDE" IN SOUTH LEBANON AND THE SCALE OF

"ITS REPRISAL. ISRAEL, NEVERTHELESS, IS STILL TREATED AS A

POTENTIAL PARTNER IN SHAPING PEACE. Y

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ISRAEL'S RAID WAS USED AS AN OCCASION TO ATTACT THE USER AND SYRIA WHICH WERE RIDUCULED FOR THE CRAVEN REACTION. THE US RECEIVED LITTLE ATTENTION PENDING A US OFFICIAL STATEMENT. EGYPT CLEARLY EXPECTS THE US TO CONDEMN THE ISRAELI ACTION AND TO LEAD DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS TO SECURE ISRAEL'S WITHDRAWL FROM

LEBANON- PI	REPARED BY					
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